



## Interesting Case from our web site [www.fairfield-vets.co.uk](http://www.fairfield-vets.co.uk)



### "Merlin" - Sheltie with Hypothyroidism



Merlin before thyroid supplementation



Merlin after treatment with Soloxine

Lethargy, weight gain, muscle weakness and hair loss are symptoms most humans might subscribe to "growing older".....or just bad luck! However at only 4 years of age these were not symptoms that "Merlin" the Sheltie or his owners were anticipating at this early stage. It was quite clear that "Merlin" had a medical problem.

Solving these medical problems requires "weight of evidence" rather than 1 simple test. Top of the most likely list in with these symptoms would be hypothyroidism or an underactive thyroid gland.

A series of blood tests are required to be as sure as possible that this is the correct diagnosis. Since the thyroid levels normally are subject to fluctuations throughout the day and in response to a variety of conditions a low thyroid level on its own is NOT sufficient to make an accurate diagnosis. Rather a low thyroid level in combination with a high "thyroid secreting hormone" (TSH) level indicates that the patient is trying very hard to produce thyroid but is unable to do so.

Such was the case with "Merlin" who additionally had a very high cholesterol reading which is entirely consistent with this disease. Once the diagnosis has been made this condition is particularly straightforward and very rewarding to treat. The thyroid deficiency is overcome with thyroid supplementation and often the transformation in the patient can be astonishing.

The main concern with long term therapy is ensuring that the thyroid levels remain within normal ranges: too high and the effect on the heart can lead to terminal failure, too low and the "ageing symptoms" can reappear.

Regular blood tests ensure that therapeutic levels are maintained. The "sad" appearance of an underactive thyroid patient is quickly replaced with a bright, lively and enthusiastic individual. Lush hair growth ensues as "Merlin" will testify and most patients look as if they have taken the elixir of life!

Now where did I put my thyroid tablets!

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This article is available on the Fairfield Veterinary Centre web site at [www.fairfield-vets.co.uk](http://www.fairfield-vets.co.uk)

***You won't care how much we know - until you know how much we care***